WHAT IS CLAIMED IS:

1.   A programmable device, comprising a comparator for comparing embedded code upon the device with a software identifier placed within a program used to program the device for determining whether, when programmed, the device is configured to fall within the scope of one or more license obligations.

2.   The device as recited in claim 1, wherein the embedded code is unalterable by the user of the device.

3.   The device as recited in claim 1, wherein the embedded code is conveyed from a mask to a semiconductor topography bearing the device.

4.   The device as recited in claim 1, wherein the embedded code is permanently programmed upon at least one non-volatile storage location of the device.

5.   The device as recited in claim 1, wherein the embedded code comprises at least one bit that signifies said one or more license obligations between a vendor or licensor of intellectual property and a manufacturer of the device.

6.   The device as recited in claim 5, wherein the embedded code is sent from the licensor of the intellectual property to the manufacturer of the device.

7.   The device as recited in claim 1, wherein the software identifier comprises at least one bit that signifies said one or more license obligations between a vendor or licensor of intellectual property and a manufacturer of the device.

8.   The device as recited in claim 1, wherein the software identifier is sent from the licensor of the intellectual property to the user of the device.

9.   The device as recited in claim 1, wherein the license obligations are royalty payments due to a vendor or licensor of intellectual property, and wherein the program is used to configure the device to function within the scope of the intellectual property owned by the vendor or licensor.

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10.   A host computer, comprising:

a programming tool adapted to program a plurality of programmable devices; and

10   a data retrieving engine adapted for coupling to the devices to compile a file if a software identifier forwarded from the programming tool matches code embedded within the devices, wherein the file comprises a royalty payment table attributable to the plurality of devices after such devices are programmed to take on functionality that falls within one or more license

15   obligations.

11.   The host computer as recited in claim 10, wherein the embedded code is manufactured into the devices prior to the device receiving the software identifier, and wherein the embedded code comprises a set of configurations of the devices which, when

20   programmed, falls within said one or more license obligations.

12.   The host computer as recited in claim 10, wherein the license obligations are those of the user or manufacturer of the devices to the licensor of the license obligations.

25   13.   The host computer as recited in claim 12, wherein the licensor is a seller of intellectual property.

14.   The host computer as recited in claim 10, wherein the payment table comprises the name of the licensors of the license obligations, an identifier of the devices being programmed, a magnitude of the license obligations, and the number of devices being programmed.

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15.   The host computer as recited in claim 10, wherein the payment table is periodically downloaded to a manufacturer of the devices to indicate the amount of royalties due to a licensor.

10   16.   A method for tracking royalty obligations, comprising

compiling code that signifies a licensing arrangement requiring said royalty obligations between a vendor of intellectual property and a user of the intellectual property;

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forwarding the code from the vendor to a manufacturer of a programmable logic device;

embedding the code into the device; and

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shipping the device containing the embedded code to a user of the programmable logic device.

17.   The method as recited in claim 16, further comprising, after said shipping,
25   programming the device with a program containing a software identifier that symbolizes intellectual property within the code used to configure the device to operate in accordance with said intellectual property.

18.   The method as recited in claim 17, further comprising, after said shipping:

programming the device with a program containing a software identifier that
symbolizes intellectual property within the code used to configure the
device to operate in accordance with said intellectual property; and

comparing the embedded code with the software identifier to determine if the
intellectual property symbolized by the software identifier matches with
the licensing arrangement requiring royalty obligations owed by the user to
the vendor.

19.   The method as recited in claim 17, further comprising, after said shipping:

programming the device with a program containing a software identifier that
symbolizes intellectual property within the code used to configure the
device to operate in accordance with said intellectual property;

comparing the embedded code with the software identifier to determine if the
intellectual property symbolized by the software identifier matches with
the licensing arrangement requiring royalty obligations owed by the user to
the vendor; and

repeating the aforementioned steps on a plurality of device while compiling a
royalty payment table that notes an amount of royalties due the vendor
from the intellectual property user.

20.   The method as recited in claim 19, wherein said compiling only occurs if the
comparing step yields a match for each of the plurality of devices being programmed.